

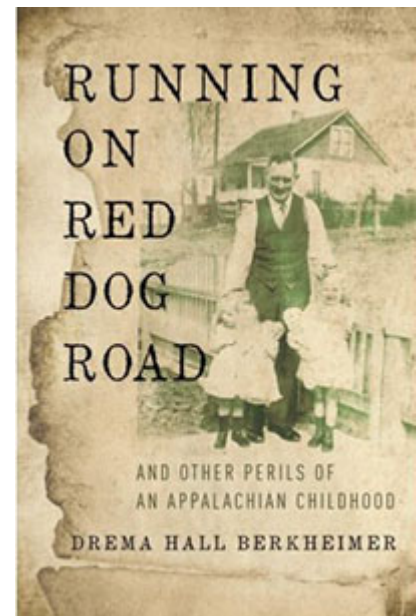
# Book Review: Running on Red Dog Road

March 1, 2016

[\*Running on Red Dog Road: And Other Perils of an Appalachian Childhood\*](#) by **Drema Hall Berkheimer (Zondervan)**

In her memoir, Drema Berkheimer invites us to listen with her grandchildren as she tells them stories from her childhood. Berkheimer grew up during World War II. Her father died in a coal-mining accident shortly after her birth, and her mother worked in a plane factory in New York. Her Pentecostal grandparents raised her as they planted churches in the hollows of West Virginia.

Like many others of that era, Berkheimer's family survived the Great Depression through thrift and ingenuity. She paints a vivid word picture: Chickens run through the yard with their heads cut off. An uncle digs through the dump for paint cans. Grandma sews towels and pedal pushers out of feed sacks.



The Appalachian culture adds a colorful depth to Berkheimer's memoir. Her grandparents baptize new converts and speak in tongues, but they draw the line at handling copperhead snakes. Moonshiners drive cars without door handles. Berkheimer sneaks out to dance around a campfire

with gypsies.

Her grandparents' faith remains steadfast despite hardship. But Berkheimer's remark, "No matter how many promises he broke, Grandma never got mad at God," causes me to wonder if Berkheimer's own faith outlasted Appalachia.

*Running on Red Dog Road* preserves the history of an extraordinary time and unique place.

*Ethel Gould*

*Aledo*